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### COLLABORATION THAT WORKS!

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#### Is collaboration something you easily embrace, or do you moan just thinking about it?

Collaboration isn't something that everyone looks forward to – for a variety of reasons.

**A basic difference is personality.** Those whose personalities are more introverted, "think to speak", which sometimes makes collaboration difficult because they are not comfortable putting their voice in the room until they've had time to think about something and sometimes the pace of collaboration doesn't allow that. To the contrary, those who are more extroverted, "speak to think", and they are often quick to add to the conversation. Both need to value each other's input and participation.

So, to those more introverted, I encourage you to put your voice in the room, even if you need to do it with a caveat, such as, "I haven't really thought this through yet, so I'm reserving the right to change my mind, but my first reaction is... or

That's the beauty of collaboration. You get pushed and stretched to go where you'd never go otherwise.

-Licia Perea

Many ideas grow better when transplanted into another mind than in the one where they sprang up.

-Oliver Wendell Holmes, Sr.

something that's coming up for me right now is...." And for those who are more extroverted, stop talking sometimes and wait. Don't continually fill the silence. Those who are more introverted will speak up if there is some silence and opportunity to think. I encourage teams to periodically take a break and say "let's hear from some who haven't spoken yet – what are your thoughts?" and then wait. It might take 30-90 seconds, but the wait will be worth it.

## So why else does collaboration create issues?

For some:

- It means giving up some control
- It potentially means changing things they feel are working well
- It takes so much time it's not worth the effort
- It creates more confusion
- It has the potential to hurt when your ideas are rejected
- Control goes to only a few in the group
- Collaboration to avoid a decision you are responsible for isn't necessarily productive unless there's a specific reason for it
- There's agreement on the issue or plan but not over who should do what, and that becomes a tug of war

And the list goes on.

## So here are some tips to help you make collaboration a positive experience for everyone with excellent results that are worth the effort:

**Tip #1: Collaboration definitely takes more time than some other methods of getting to agreement, so start by getting clear on why you want to collaborate:**

- What is the goal?
- Are you trying to fix something that affects multiple people, departments, etc., who need to be part of the solution so it works for everyone?
- Have you come up against an obstacle that requires some creativity or out-of-the-box thinking? (In which case more heads are better than one).
- Are you moving forward to create something new that needs multiple perspectives and buy-in to make it successful?
- Are you trying to resolve an issue of conflict that also needs buy-in rather than one person or group just making the decision?

**Tip #2: Decide who needs to be in the room and why.**

When you need to innovate, you need collaboration.

-Marissa Mayer,

Former president and CEO of Yahoo!

UNITY IS STRENGTH. WHEN THERE IS TEAMWORK AND COLLABORATION, WONDERFUL THINGS CAN BE ACHIEVED.

-MATTIE STEPANEK

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**THROUGH COACHING YOU CAN:**

Get clear on your goals and direction

Recognize and capitalize on your strengths

- What do they bring to the process that is helpful or necessary?
- Do you have everyone who genuinely needs to be there?
- Include only those who have a purpose. The bigger the group gets, the harder it becomes to reach agreement.

### Tip #3: Start with an agreed-upon “Statement of Purpose” of the work for which you are coming together.

- This might seem obvious after Tip #1, but it isn't and everyone needs to start on the same page so you understand why you are being brought together and you can move purposefully toward the goal.
- If you are not in agreement about why you are together to collaborate, the process can end up going in all kinds of directions and tangents and that's when it easily gets uncomfortable with conflict and wastes a lot of everyone's time.

### Tip #4: After you have a statement of purpose, next, create and agree on a list of criteria against which you will be able to judge ideas for a successful outcome.

- This is actually an advanced negotiation technique we, at KCS, use for interest-based negotiations or what you might know as “Win-Win Bargaining”.
- By spending the time up front to agree on criteria, you will save a lot of time throughout the process by testing ideas against the criteria before you spend a lot of time developing those ideas.
- Talking about the criteria before you start talking about ideas, also gives you the opportunity to create that criteria with more objectivity before ideas start flowing.
- Here are some examples of what I mean by criteria, the solution will:
  - Solve the problem of (define the problem)
  - Fit within the budget
  - Will include a, b, and c to remain competitive with other companies
  - Will have a maximum production time of \_\_\_\_\_
  - Will be within a price range for our customers of \_\_\_\_\_
  - Can be accomplished with current staff/capacity
  - Will increase the production costs, budget, staffing, etc. by not more than \_\_\_\_\_
  - Will be ready to present to the board by \_\_\_\_\_ date
  - Will solve the issue for all three departments involved

### Tip #5: Agree on your decision-making process up front.

- Will you use consensus? (A process I use is “Fist to Five” – Click [here](#) for a link to the instructions for using this – it's simple and powerful!)
- Will it be majority rule? Secret ballot or show of hands?
- Will you require everyone to be in agreement?

Think through complex and sticky issues

Re-examine your perspective when appropriate

Create a plan you can confidently embrace to move forward



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- Will you need to put it in front of some other group with the authority to decide? If so, what requirement will you have to actually agree to take something to them?
- Do you have some other method of decision-making you want to use?

### **Tip #6 – The Catch All**

**Here is a list of general things that will help make your collaboration more successful and efficient:**

- Create ground rules and call each other out to stick with them
- Give everyone equal air time
- Brainstorming is generating as many ideas as possible WITHOUT giving any feedback when the idea is put on the table – keep generating before judging otherwise you shut people down. A really terrible idea may be the idea that gives someone else THE winner. Just keep generating ideas as fast as possible. Later you can assess them, but first get as many ideas on the table, no matter how crazy!
- Slow down to give those who are more introverted time to think and respond
- Use facilitation tools to narrow choices
- Ultimately judge ideas against the criteria you created
- Have an agenda for each meeting
- Decide who will do what
- Create next steps and schedule the next meeting before you end each meeting.
- Create action plans with who, what, when, cost, resources, etc.

**If you have questions or need some facilitation help, please reach out to me for a complimentary consult.**



**Joy Conley Kacik**

**Joy is a conference speaker, team and leadership development consultant, customized trainer and facilitator and a Certified Professional Coach with expertise in personal career coaching, job offer and salary negotiations and executive coaching.**

As an Insights Discovery® licensed practitioner, Joy provides clients the added value of the Discovery® Portfolio of tools when working with individuals, teams, leaders and organizations to create inspiring visions for collaborative, cohesive teams to produce superior results.

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